

Elke Mashama
Photomax (A Division of Big Planet)

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Dear Sir or Madam:

I present this letter as an urgent message to the FTC that going forward with the proposed Business Opportunity Rule R511993 is a grave mistake in the making. As a full time network marketer I cannot stay silent while this seeming act of prejudice, even if unintended, against the direct selling industry and against we the people who have chosen this as our profession possibly comes to completion. We are in the business of helping people by offering solutions through great and unique products and services as well as a vehicle to achieving massive success for those who seek it. We are not in the business of crookedness. Too often the new and unconventional things are feared and become targets for undue scrutiny, criticism, scandal and punishment when all we have to do is a little investigation to find out what they're truly about.

I can tell you personally what the network marketing business is all about. This business makes it necessary for me to reach deep down into my being and pull out my fullest potential – I mean it really allows me to be the greatest that I can be. When I was an employee in the corporate world there was often a limit placed on my ability to shine due to politics. My bosses wanted me to just be good enough to get the job done. To be any greater would mean a threat to their positions not to mention the possibility that I could become worthy of a higher salary than they. In network marketing, I don't have to "know my place". I get to work with a team of people who want me to succeed without boundaries. There's no back stabbing, no partiality, no one yelling at me and no one deciding whether I'm worthy of a raise, a bonus or a future for that matter.

As a wife and mother of three small children, being employed within Corporate America became grossly incompatible with my lifestyle. I'll never forget the very week before I resigned I was told I could not go home until a certain project that wasn't even my responsibility was completed. My 7 month old baby was the one who had to suffer that night and many other nights when I was required to work late mainly to show "face time". Thank God for the network marketing opportunity I found in Photomax, otherwise I would have been stuck as a slave to a paycheck in a meaningless job that kept me away from my family who needed me so much. This business gave me freedom - real freedom, freedom to be with my loved ones, freedom from a boss telling me what to do, when and how to do it, freedom from financial constraint because of a paycheck that wasn't enough, freedom to go to Church on Sunday instead of being stuck at work, freedom to be me and not having to be a phony in order to maintain a position, freedom from stress and depression which often used to set in and further eat away at the quality of my life and my relationships, freedom that comes from doing what's rewarding and to make a true difference in the lives of others and freedom to earn as much money as I know I am worth.

That's what this business is all about. Freedom and simply a better way. Please don't rob all present and future direct sellers/network marketers of this better way by placing all these limiting and unnecessary requirements on the industry's practices. Network marketing companies already have measures in place to protect the consumer such as the 12 month buy

back policy which Photomax offers. When something good and beneficial comes your way the time to take advantage is now, not seven days later. A seven day waiting period would have kept even the most zealous opportunity seeker like myself from becoming a network marketer. People buy TVs, cars, and other items that cost much more and they do not have to wait seven days. This waiting period gives the impression that there might be something wrong with the company or the compensation plan and it's unfair to discriminate against our form of business in this way. As far as the earnings disclosures, I've never been shown an earnings statement from a prospective employer. This is a business opportunity not a job opportunity with a paycheck. In my network marketing, or even in a traditional business my earnings are dependent on me and how dedicated I am to running my business not on what another distributor or business owner earns. In any case, a prospect can get information on income earnings within the business they're exploring without me having to accumulate reams and reams of my personal earnings data.

My last point is that entrepreneurship is great for the economy. Direct selling/networking marketing gives many people the opportunity to become entrepreneurs who otherwise could not afford to go into business for themselves. Entrepreneurs can spend more as they become more prosperous, and since consumer spending keeps our economy up, how could this be a bad thing? Because of the unique training systems, network marketing is the one form of business that quickly educates individuals into successful entrepreneurship helping them develop a mindset that commands financial success. Since starting this business the decisions my husband and I make are more beneficial to our family and our pursuits. We happen to own a Martial Arts School and through network marketing training we've developed skills that have helped us increase customer satisfaction and generate greater revenues from our School.

Overall Network Marketing has changed my life and the lives of many others whom I've had the pleasure of meeting and becoming friends with through this wonderful business. Please don't ruin what happens to be the greatest outcome of capitalism by imposing these unnecessary constraints on our business practices. It would be devastating for me and millions of other successful direct sellers/network marketers to have our financial stability compromised in this way. I beg of the FTC to have a heart and don't slowly and painfully put us out of business and deprive prospective network marketers of that hope of a better way by deterring them with negative impressions of this form of business. I appreciate the work that the FTC does to protect consumers, yet I believe this proposed new rule has many unintended consequences and there are less burdensome alternatives available to achieving your goals.

Thank you for your time in considering my comments.

Respectfully Yours
Elke Mashama
Independent Distributor, Photomax